

**Testimony of Christy Kovel, Director of Public Policy
Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter
Submitted to the Aging Committee
Thursday March 3, 2022**

Senator Miller, Representative Garibay and Distinguished Members of the Aging Committee, my name is Christy Kovel and I am the Director of Public Policy for the Alzheimer's Association CT Chapter.

The Alzheimer's Association leads the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the following bills:

S.B. No. 175 (RAISED) AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESPITE CARE PROGRAM AND SUPPORTING AGING IN PLACE.

Currently there are 80,000 people in Connecticut living with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia. The Alzheimer's Association estimates that this number will rise to 91,000 people by 2025. Connecticut is the 6th oldest state in the nation and age remains the biggest risk factor to developing Alzheimer's disease or other dementia.

More than 80% of the help provided to older adults in the United States comes from family members, friends, or other unpaid caregivers — and nearly half of families caring for an older adult are caring for someone with dementia.

Respite services provide temporary, substitute care that gives the caregiver a break from his or her caregiving duties. Alzheimer's disease is a progressive disease affecting a person's ability to complete activities of daily living, and caregivers are often concerned with issues like wandering and home safety. The services can be provided in a variety of settings, including the individual's home, adult day centers, and in facilities. This temporary relief enables caregivers to ensure their loved ones continue to receive quality care while giving themselves an opportunity to manage and improve their own health which is often compromised. Compared with caregivers of people without dementia, twice as many caregivers of those with dementia indicate substantial emotional, financial and physical difficulties.

On average, a person with Alzheimer's lives four to eight years after diagnosis, but can live as long as 20 years, depending on other factors. Home and Community Based Services including the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program are the less costly option and create autonomy in the home.

The individuals that contact our 24-hour Helpline often need services and supports immediately as they've been trying to care for their loved one but are struggling with the effects of caregiving on their own health.

We know expanding access and increasing the funding for this program is vitally needed to meet the growing numbers of people who will be impacted in Connecticut. Additionally, we'd like to recommend increased transparency on where the dollars are in the budget to accurately reflect the utilization.

To note on the bill from the [Aging and Disability Services website](#): Current applicants (individuals with Alzheimer's or a related dementia) must have an income of \$48,266 a year or less, liquid assets of \$128,321 or less, and cannot be enrolled in the Connecticut Homecare Program for Elders. Effective July 1, 2022 these limits will change to \$51,114 and \$135,892, respectively.

Raised Bill #5194: AN ACT CONCERNING REGISTRATION OF TEMPORARY NURSING SERVICES AGENCIES

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated staffing issues with the long-term care workforce and temporary nurses' services agencies have been utilized to fill a void in the industry.

The [Alzheimer's Association Dementia Care Practice Recommendations](#) were developed to better define quality care across all care settings and throughout the disease course. They are intended for professional care providers who work with individuals living with dementia and their families in long-term and community-based care settings.

Staff who work with older adults should be sufficiently trained in all aspects of care, including dementia care. Connecticut has dementia training requirements for nurses that work in long-term care. Asking that these agencies register with the Connecticut Department of Public Health may help ensure that training requirements are followed as these vary from state to state.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide comment today.